THE
CALENDAR OF NATURE:

OR,

YOUTH's DELIGHTFUL COMPANION.

CONTAINING,

DETAILS OF NATURAL HISTORY,

The Narrative variegated with

POETICAL QUOTATIONS

From the moſt celebrated Authors.

Embelliſhed with ENGRAVINGS, repreſenting the

FOUR SEASONS.

Calculated principally to inſpire a Taſte for the moſt curious products of ART, as well as for the principal beauties of NATURE.

BY J. AIKIN, ESQ.

LONDON:

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M,DCC,LXXXIX.

1789.

MAY

TO

MRS. BARBAULD.

DEAR SISTER,

THOUGH some of the warm admirers of your Poetry have cenſured you for employing talents of ſo ſuperior a kind in the compoſition of books for children, yet I believe, there are few parents who do not think themſelves obliged to you for this condeſcenſion: and if you are ambitious of higher approbation, you may aſſure yourſelf of that of the

philoſopher, who muſt agree with you in thinking, that to lay a foundation for ſuch a ſtructure as that of the human mind, cannot be an ignoble employment. Nor have your ſervices in this important deſign been confined to your own exertions. It has been partly from your example that others have been induced to conſecrate reſpectable abilities to the ſame uſeful purpoſe; and the great ſuperiority obſervable in the books for the inſtruction of children publiſhed within a few years paſt, to thoſe of former periods, is owing to the ſuperior literary rank of the authors.

For my own part, I have no heights to deſcend from on the preſent occaſion; nor do I apprehend, if the execution of my plan correſponds with the intention, that any of my literary acquaintances will

will wiſh (profeſſional ſtudies apart) I had been otherwiſe employed.

The idea of ſuch a Calendar as I have here drawn up, has been always a favourite one with me; and tho' had it been deſigned for a different claſs of readers, a larger compaſs might have been taken, and a more learned and elevated character of writing have been aimed at, yet it muſt ſtill have remained eſſentially the ſame; and its merit muſt ſtill have been merely that of compilation.

The plan itſelf is a borrowed one; and you muſt certainly recollect its model in one of your own little books, where, in a very entertaining manner, you give a brief deſcription of the ſeveral months, formed of ſome of the moſt ſtriking cir-

cumſtances attending each. What you have done for a child three or four years old, I have attempted for young people from ten to fourteen. I have collected more circumſtances, entered into ſome details of natural hiſtory, opened ſome general views of that grand ſyſtem, the economy of nature; *and have variegated the narration with numerous poetical quotations, in order to inſpire a taſte for the moſt delightful product of art, as well as for the principal beauties of nature.*

Conceiving that, at the age for which this work is calculated, it is adviſeable to inculcate an acquaintance with words of every rank and denomination, I have not ſtudied to bring down the language to that common and familiar ſtandard

to

to which the readers may be ſuppoſed already accuſtomed. I have rather aimed at increaſing their ſtock of words, as well as of ideas; ſo far, at leaſt, as could, be done without embarraſſing them with a number of technical and ſyſtematic terms.

If it be neceſſary to make particular acknowledgements of aſſiſtance, where the whole is confeſſed to be borrowed, I would mention Mr. Stillingfleet's *moſt elegant* Calendar of Flora *as the ſource of many of my beſt materials.— The reſt of the debt is divided among various books of natural hiſtory and rural economy.*

Such is the little work which is now offered to your acceptance. You have already

already beſtowed a very flattering approbation upon a ſpecimen of it, and have ſtrongly urged me to its completion. I ſhall be happy if it is found agreeably to vary the round of Engliſh books with which your ears muſt now be fully ſatiated from the repetition of your young pupils; and I rejoice in the opportunity it affords me, of publicly expreſſing the pride and pleaſure I feel, in ſubſcribing myſelf

Your moſt affectionate Brother,

J. AIKIN.

WARRINGTON,
May 20, 1789.

4

WINTER

THE CALENDAR OF NATURE.

JANUARY.

Stern winter's icy breath, intenſely keen,
Now chills the blood, and withers every green;
Bright ſhines the azure ſky, ſerenely fair,
Or driving ſnows obſcure the turbid air.

CIVILIZED nations in general now agree to begin reckoning the new year from the firſt of January. Yet it may ſeem ſtrange to call that a *new*

ſeaſon, when every thing is moſt inactive and lifeleſs; when animals are benumbed by the cold, and vegetables are all dead or withered. For this reaſon, ſome have thought it beſt to begin the year in Spring, when the face of nature is really *renewed*. But as this happens at different times in different years and climates, it has at length been determined to date the commencement of the year as at preſent, within a few days after the *winter-ſolſtice*, or ſhorteſt day. This always takes place on the twenty-firſt day of December, and from that time the days are gradually lengthened, till the middle of Summer;

Summer; ſo that the year may properly be ſaid to be now *turned*.

January is the coldeſt month in this part of the world; and in England we ſeldom have much froſt or ſnow before it. The weather is commonly either clear dry froſt, or fog and ſnow, with rain now and then intermixed.

Nothing can be more wonderful than the effects of froſt. To ſee the running ſtream ſtopped in its courſe; the lake that was curled by every breeze, converted into a firm plain; the moiſt ground dried up and made as hard as

rock; and all this done by an inviſible power in the ſpace of a ſingle night; would be infinitely ſurpriſing to one unacuſtomed to the ſight. Theſe effects are painted in a very lively manner by THOMSON, in his *Seaſons*.

An icy gale, oft ſhifting, o'er the pool
Breathes a blue film, and in its mid career
Arreſts the bickering ſtream,
Loud rings the frozen earth, and hard reflects
A double noiſe; while at his evening watch,
The village dog deters the nightly thief;
The heifer lows; the diſtant water-fall
Swells in the breeze; and with the haſty thread
Of traveller, the hollow-ſounding plain
Shakes from afar.
It freezes on,
Till morn, late riſing o'er the drooping world,
Lifts her pale eye unjoyous. Then appears

The

The various labour of the ſilent night:
Prone from the dripping eave, and dumb caſcade,
Whoſe idle torrents only ſeem to roar.
The pendant icicle; the froſt work fair,
Where tranſient hues and fancy'd figures riſe;
Wide ſpouted o'er the hill, the frozen brook,
A livid tract, cold gleaming on the morn.

Water, when frozen, is *expanded*; that is, takes up more room than before; hence ice is lighter than water, and ſwims upon it. From this cauſe, if a bottle full of water, hard corked, be ſet to freeze, the bottles will be broken, for want of room for the expanſion of the water. Water-pipes often burſt from the ſame cauſe; and hoops fly off from barrels. Nay, even

a gun-barrel or a cannon, filled with water, and ſcrewed up at the muzzle, have been burſt in an intenſe froſt.

The ſame property produces a very beneficial effect to the huſbandman; for the hard clods of the ploughed fields are looſened and broke to pieces by the ſwelling of the water within them, when frozen. Hence the earth is crumbled, and prepared for receiving the ſeed in Spring.

Snow is the water of clouds frozen. On a cloſe examination it is found to be all compoſed of icy darts or ſtars.

Its

Its whiteneſs is owing to the ſmall particles into which it is divided. Ice when pounded becomes equally white. Snow is very uſeful by covering the plants, and protecting them from the ſeverity of the froſt; for at a certain depth under the ſnow, the cold always continues the ſame. It is alſo thought to enrich the ground, and ſerve as a ſort of manure; but ſome ſuppoſe it not at all different from rain in this reſpect. The beauty of a country all clothed in new-fallen ſnow is very ſtriking.

The cheriſhed fields
Put on their winter-robe of pureſt white.

'Tis brightneſs all; ſave where the new ſnow melts
Along the mazy current. Low, the woods
Bow their hoar head; and ere the languid ſun
Faint from the weſt emits his evening ray,
Earth's univerſal face, deep hid and chill,
Is one wild dazzling waſte, that buries wide
The works of man.

THOMSON.

Hail-ſtones are drops of rain ſuddenly congealed into a hard maſs, ſo as to preſerve their figure. Theſe often fall in warmer ſeaſons of the year, as even then the upper regions of the atmoſphere are very cold.

Hoar-froſt is dew or miſt frozen. It adheres to every object on which it falls, and produces figures of incomparable beauty and elegance. Every twig and

and blade of graſs is beſet by it with innumerable glittering pearly drops, or ſilvery plumage, beyond the ſkill of any artiſt to imitate.

Sometimes it happens that a ſudden ſhower of rain falls during a froſt, and immediately turns to ice. A remarkable ſcene is then produced, which the following lines moſt beautifully deſcribe.

Ere yet the clouds let fall the treaſured ſnow,
Or winds begun thro' hazy ſkies to blow,
At evening a keen eaſtern breeze aroſe,
And the deſcending rain unſullied froze.
Soon as the ſilent ſhades of night withdrew,
The ruddy morn diſclos'd at once to view

The

The face of nature in a rich diſguiſe,
And brightened every object to my eyes:
For every ſhrub, and every blade of graſs,
And every pointed thorn ſeem'd wrought in glaſs;
In pearls and rubies rich the hawthorns ſhow,
While thro' the ice the crimſon berries glow.
The thick-ſprung reeds the wat'ry marſhes yield,
Seem poliſhed lances in a hoſtile field.
The ſtag, in limpid currents, with ſurprize,
Sees chryſtal branches on his forehead riſe.
The ſpreading oak, the beech, and tow'ring pine,
Glaz'd over, in the freezing ether ſhine,
The frighted birds the rattling branches ſhun,
That wave and glitter in the diſtant ſun,
When, if a ſudden guſt of wind ariſe,
The brittle foreſt into atoms flies.
The cracking wood beneath the tempeſt bends,
And in a ſpangled ſhow'r the proſpect ends.

PHILIPS, Lett. from Copenhagen.

In ſuch a caſe, prodigious miſchief has been done in the woods, by the breaking

breaking down vaſt arms of trees, which were overloaded by the weight of the ice encruſting them.

The inclemency of the ſeaſon is ſhewn by its effects on animals, particularly on the numerous tribes of birds. As the cold advances, they collect in flocks, quit their retreats, and rendered bold by want, approach the habitations of man. Larks and various other ſmall birds ſhelter themſelves in the warm ſtubble. Sparrows, yellow-hammers, and chaff-finches, crowd into the farm-yards, and attend the barn-doors to pick their ſcanty fare from the chaff

and

and ſtraw. The red-breaſt ventures into the houſe,

---------- and pays to truſted man
His annual viſit.

Fieldfares and truſhes in large flocks deſcend from the tops of trees, and frequent the warm manured fields in the neighbourhood of towns. Snipes, woodcocks, wild ducks, and other water-fowl are forced from the frozen marſhes, and obliged to ſeek their food about the rapid currents of ſtreams which are yet unfrozen. As the cold grows more intenſe, various kinds of ſea-fowl quit the bleak open ſhores,

and

and come up the rivers, where they offer an unuſual prey to the fowler.

The wild quadrupeds, too, are driven from their accuſtomed remote haunts. Hares enter the gardens to browze on the cultivated vegetables; and leaving their tracks in the ſnow, are frequently hunted down or caught in ſnares. The hen-rooſts are pillaged by foxes, polecats, and other ſmall beaſts of prey which our country breeds; but we are happily unacquainted with the ravenous troops of wolves, bears, and other fierce creatures, which, urged by famine at this ſeaſon, often terrify the villages

villages in the mountainous and woody regions on the Continent.

The domeſtic cattle now require all the care and protection of the farmer. Sheep are often loſt in the ſudden ſtorms by which the ſnow is drifted into the hollows, ſo as to bury them a great depth beneath it. Yet they have been known to ſurvive many days in this ſituation. Cows with much ado ſcratch up a few mouthfuls of graſs; but for their chief ſubſiſtence they muſt depend upon the hay and other proviſion of the farm-yard. Early lambs and calves are kept within doors, and tended with as much care as the farmer's own children.

Now,

Now, ſhepherds, to your helpleſs charge be kind,
Baffle the raging year, and fill their pens
With food at will; lodge them below the ſtorm,
And watch them ſtrict: for from the bellowing eaſt,
In this dire ſeaſon, oft the whirlwind's wing
Sweeps up the burthen of whole wintry plains
At one wide waft, and o'er the hapleſs flocks,
Hid in the hollow of two neighbouring hills,
The hillowy tempeſt whelms; till, upwards urg'd,
The valley to a ſhining mountain ſwells,
Tipt with a wreath high-curling in the ſky.

THOMSON.

The plants at this ſeaſon are provided by nature with a kind of winter-quarters, which ſecures them from the effects of cold. Thoſe called *herbaceous*, which die down to the root every Autumn, are now ſafely concealed under ground, preparing their new ſhoots to burſt

burſt forth when the earth is ſoftened by Spring. Shrubs and trees, which are expoſed to the open air, have all their ſoft and tender parts cloſely wrapt up in buds, which by their firmneſs reſiſt all the force of froſt. If one of theſe buds be carefully opened, it is found to conſiſt of young leaves rolled together, within which are even all the bloſſoms in miniature, which are afterwards to adorn the Spring. Some of theſe are much forwarder than others. The leaves of the woodbine appear juſt ready to expand by the end of the month; the flowers of the mezereon and ſnow-drop ſeem on the point

point of blowing; and the catkin or male flower-bunch of the hazel begins to unfold.

During the ſeverity of the froſt, little work can be done out of doors by the huſbandman. As ſoon as it ſets in, he takes the opportunity of the hardneſs of the ground to draw manure to his fields. He lops and cuts timber, and mends thorn-hedges. When the roads become ſmooth from the frozen ſnow, he takes his team, and carries hay and corn to market, or brings coals for himſelf and neighbours. The barn reſounds with the flail, by the uſe

of which the labourer is enabled to defy the cold weather.

In towns, the poor are pinched for fewel and food, and charity is peculiarly called for at this comfortless time of the year. Many traders are at a stand during the severity of the frost. Rivers and canals being frozen up, watermen and bargemen are without employment. The harbours in this island, however, are never locked up by the ice, as they are for many months in the northern parts of Europe.

The

The amuſements of ſliding, ſkating, and other paſtimes on the ice, give life to this dreary ſeaſon; but our froſts are not continued and ſteady enough to afford us ſuch a ſhare of theſe diverſions as ſome other nations enjoy.

Where the Rhine
Branch'd out in many a long canal extends,
From every province ſwarming, void of care,
Batavia ruſhes forth; and as they ſweep,
On ſounding ſkates, a thouſand different ways,
In circling poiſe, ſwift as the winds, along,
The then gay land is maddened all to joy.
Nor leſs the Northern courts, wide o'er the ſnow,
Pour a new pomp. Eager, on rapid ſleds,
Their vigourous youth in bold contention wheel
The long-reſounding courſe. Mean time to raiſe
The manly ſtrife, with highly blooming charms,

Flush'd by the season, Scandinavia's dames,
Or Russia's buxom daughters glow around.
THOMSON.

FEBRUARY.

FEBRUARY.

Now ſhifting gales with milder influence blow,
Cloud o'er the ſkies, and melt the falling ſnow;
The ſoftened earth with fertile moiſture teems,
And freed from icy bonds, down ruſh the ſwelling ſtreams.

THE earlier part of this month may ſtill be reckoned Winter; though the cold generally begins to abate. The days are now ſenſibly lengthened; and the ſun has power enough gradually to melt away the ſnow and ice. Sometimes, a ſudden thaw comes on, with a

ſouth wind and rain, which all at once diſſolves the ſnow. Torrents of water then deſcend from the hills, every little brook and rill is ſwelled to a large ſtream; and the ice is ſwept away with great violence from the rivers.

Muttering, the winds at eve, with blunted point,
Blow hollow-bluſtering from the ſouth. Subdued
The froſt reſolves into a trickling thaw.
Spotted the mountains ſhine, looſe ſleet deſcends,
And floods the country round. The rivers ſwell,
Of bonds impatient. Sudden from the hills,
O'er rocks and woods, in broad brown cataracts,
A thouſand ſnow-fed torrents ſhoot at once;
And, where they ruſh, the wide-reſounding plain
Is left one ſlimy waſte.

THOMSON.

The

1

SPRING

The froſt, however, returns for a time; then freſh ſnow falls, often in great quantities; and thus the weather alternately changes during moſt part of this month.

Various ſigns of returning Spring occurs at different times in February. The wood-lark, one of the earlieſt and ſweeteſt ſongſters, often begins his note at the very entrance of the month. Not long after, rooks begin to pair, and geeſe to lay. The truſh and chaffinch then add to the early muſic of the groves. Near the cloſe of the month, partridges begin to couple, and repair

the ravages committed on this devoted ſpecies during the Autumn and Winter.

Moles go to work in throwing up their hillocks as ſoon as the earth is ſoftened. Under ſome of the largeſt, a little below the ſurface of the earth, they make their neſts of moſs, in which four or five young are found at a time. Theſe animals live on worms, inſects, and the roots of plants. They do much miſchief in gardens, by looſening and devouring flower-roots; but in the in the fields they ſeem to do no other damage than rendering the ſurface

face of the ground unequal by their hillocks, which obſtruct the ſcythe in mowing. They are ſaid alſo to pierce the ſides of dams and canals, and let out the water.

Many plants emerge from under ground in February, but few flowers as yet adorn the fields or gardens. Snow-drops generally are fully opened from the beginning of the month, often peeping out from the midſt of the ſnow.

Already now the ſnowdrop dares appear,
The firſt pale bloſſom of th' unripen'd year;
As Flora's breath by ſome transforming power,
Had chang'd an icicle into a flower.

Its name and hue the ſcentleſs plant retains,
And winter lingers in its icy veins.

MRS. BARBAULD.

The elder-tree diſcloſes its flower-buds. The catkins of the hazel become very conſpicuous in the hedges. Young leaves are budding on the gooſeberries and currants about the end of the month.

The farmer is impatient to begin his work in the fields as ſoon as the ground is ſufficiently thawed. He ploughs up his fallows; ſows beans and peas, rye and ſpring wheat; ſets early potatoes; drains his wet lands; dreſſes and repairs hedges; lops trees, and plants thoſe kinds

kinds which love a wet soil, as poplars and willows.

MARCH.

Winter ſtill lingering on the verge of Spring,
Retires reluctant, and from time to time
Looks back, while at his keen and chilling breath,
Fair Flora ſickens.

THE great operations of nature during this month, ſeem to be, to dry up the ſuperabundant moiſture of February, thereby preventing the roots and ſeeds from rotting in the earth; and gradually to bring forward the proceſs of fructification in the ſwelling buds, whilſt, at the ſame time, by the whole-

ſome

ſome ſeverity of chilling blaſts, they are kept from a premature diſcloſure, which would expoſe their tender contents to injury from the yet unſettled ſeaſon. This effect is beautifully touched upon in a ſimile of SHAKESPEAR'S.

> And like the tyrannous breathings of the north,
> Checks all our buds from blowing.

This ſeeming tyranny, however, is to be regarded as the moſt uſeful diſcipline; and thoſe years generally prove moſt fruitful, in which the pleaſing appearances of Spring are the lateſt.

The

The ſun has now acquired ſo much power, that on a clear day we often feel all the genial influence of Spring, though the naked ſhrubs rnd trees ſtill give the landſcape the comfortleſs appearance of Winter. But ſoft pleaſant weather in March is ſeldom of long duration.

As yet the trembling year is unconfirm'd,
And Winter oft at eve reſumes the breeze,
Chills the pale morn, and bids his driving fleets
Deform the day delightleſs

As ſoon as a few dry days have made the land fit for working, the farmer goes to the plough; and if the fair weather continues, proceeds to ſowing oats and barley.

barley, though this buſineſs is ſeldom finiſhed till the next month. The importance of a dry ſeaſon for getting the ſeed early and favourably into the ground, is expreſſed in the old proverb,

A buſhel of March duſt is worth a king's ranſom.

The mellow note of the throſtle, who ſings perched on the naked bough of ſome lofty tree, is heard from the beginning of the month; at the ſame time the ring-dove cooes in the woods. The rookery is now all in motion with the pleaſing labour of building and repairing neſts; and highly amuſing it is to obſerve the tricks and artifices of

the

the thieviſh tribe, ſome to defend, and others to plunder, the materials of their new habitations. Theſe birds are accuſed of doing much injury to the farmer by plucking up the young corn, and other ſpringing vegetables; but ſome think this miſchief fully repaid by their diligence in picking up the grubs of various inſects, which, if ſuffered to grow to maturity, would occaſion much greater damage. For this purpoſe, they are frequently ſeen following the plough, or ſettling in flocks on newly-turned up lands.

Some birds, which took refuge in our temperate climate from the rigour of the northern winters, now begin to leave us, and return to the countries where they were bred. The red-wing, thruſh, field-fare, and woodcock, are of this kind; and retire to ſpend their ſummer in Norway, Sweden, and other parts of the north.

The gannets or ſoland-geeſe reſort during this month to thoſe Scotch iſles, where they breed in ſuch numbers, as to cover almoſt the whole ſurface of the ground with their eggs and young.

Frogs,

Frogs, which during Winter lay in a torpid ſtate at the bottom of ponds or ditches, are enlivened by the warmth of Spring, and early in this month riſe to the ſurface of the water in vaſt numbers. They are at firſt very timorous, and dive to the bottom with great quickneſs as one approaches; but in the coupling ſeaſon they become bolder, and make themſelves heard at a great diſtance by their croaking.

Thoſe moſt elegant fiſh, ſmelts or ſparlings, begin to run up the rivers in this month in order to ſpawn. They are of ſo tender a nature, that the leaſt

mixture of ſnow-water in the river drives them back to the ſea.

But nothing in the animal creation is a more pleaſing ſpectacle, than the ſporting of the young lambs, moſt of which are yeaned this month, and are truſted abroad when the weather is tolerably mild. DYER, in his poem of *The Fleece*, gives a very natural and beautiful deſcription of this circumſtance.

Spread around thy tend'reſt diligence,
In flow'ry ſpring-time, when the new dropt lamb
Tottering with weakneſs by his mother's ſide,
Feels the freſh world about him; and each thorn,
Hillock, or furrow, trips his feeble feet:

O guard

O guard his meek ſweet innocence from all
Th' innumerous ills, that ruſh around his life;
Mark the quick kite, with beak and talons prone,
Circling the ſkies to ſnatch him from the plain;
Obſerve the lurking crows; beware the brake,
There the ſly fox the careleſs minute waits;
Nor truſt thy neighbour's dog, nor earth nor ſky:
Thy boſom to a thouſand cares divide.
Eurus oft ſlings his hail; the tardy fields
Pay not their promis'd food; and oft the dam
O'er her weak twins with empty udder mourns,
Or fails to guard, when the bold bird of prey
Alights, and hops in many turns around,
And tires her alſo turning: to her aid
Be nimble, and the weakeſt, in thine arms,
Gently convey to the warm cote, and oft,
Between the lark's note and the nightingale's,
His hungry bleating ſtill with tepid milk;
In this ſoft office may thy children join,
And charitable habits learn in ſport;

Nor yield him to himſelf, ere vernal airs
Sprinkle thy little croft with daiſy flowers.

Another moſt agreeable token of the arrival of Spring, is that the bees begin to venture out of their hives about the middle of this month. As their food is the honey-like juice found in the tubes of flowers, their coming abroad is a certain ſign that flowers are now to be met with. No creature ſeems poſſeſſed of a greater power of foreſeeing the weather; ſo that their appearance in the morning, may be reckoned a ſure token of a fair day.

The gardens are now rendered gay by the crocuſes, which adorn the borders

ders with a rich mixture of the brighteſt yellow and purple. The little ſhrubs of mezereon are in their beauty. The fields look green with the ſpringing graſs, but few wild flowers as yet decorate the ground. Daiſies, however, begin to be ſprinkled over the dry paſtures; and the moiſt banks of ditches are enlivened with the gloſſy ſtar-like yellow flowers of pilewort. Towards the end of the month, primroſes peep out beneath the hedges; and the moſt delightfully fragrant of all flowers, the violet, diſcovers itſelf by the perfume it imparts to the ſurrounding air, before the eye has

perceived it in its lowly bed. SHAKESPEARE compares an exquiſitely ſweet ſtrain of muſic, to the delicious ſcent of this flower.

O! it came o'er my ear, like the ſweet ſouth,
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour.

There are ſeveral kinds of violets; but the fragrant (both blue and white) is the earlieſt, thence called the *March violet*, To theſe flowers SHAKESPEARE adds the daffodil,

Which comes before the ſwallow dares, and tints
The winds of March with beauty.

Beſides

Beſides the hazel, the ſallow now enlivens the hedges with its catkins full of yellow duſt; and the alder trees are covered with a kind of black bunches which are the male and female flowers. The leaves of honeyſuckles are nearly expanded. In the gardens, the peach and nectarine, the almond, the cherry and apricot trees, come into full bud during this month. The gardeners find plenty of employment in pruning trees, digging and manuring beds, and ſowing a great variety of ſeeds, both for the flower and kitchen garden.

In the latter part of this month the *equinox* happens, when day and night are of equal length all over the globe: or rather, when the ſun is an equal time above, and below, the horizon. For the morning and evening twilight make apparent day conſiderably longer than night. This takes place again in September. The firſt is called the *vernal*, the latter, the *autumnal* equinox. At theſe times ſtorms and tempeſts are particularly frequent, whence they have always been the terror of mariners. March winds are boiſterous and vehement to a proverb.

APRIL.

APRIL.

Now daiſies pied, and violets blue,
And ladyſmocks all ſilver white,
And cuckow-buds of yellow hue,
Do paint the meadows with delight;
The cuckow now on every tree
Sings cuckoo—cuckoo.

APRIL weather is become a proverbial expreſſion for a mixture of the bright and gloomy. The pleaſantneſs of its ſunſhiny days, with the delightful view of freſh greens and newly opened flowers, is unequalled; but they

are

are frequently overcaſt with clouds, and chilled by rough wintry blaſts.

Her face was like an April morn.
Clad in a wintry cloud;

ſays the beautiful ballad of *Margaret's ghoſt.*

This month gives the moſt perfect image of Spring; for its viciſſitudes of warm gleams of ſunſhine, aud gentle ſhowers, have the moſt powerful effects in haſtening that univerſal *ſpringing* of the vegetable tribes, from whence the ſeaſon derives its appellation.

April generally begins with raw unpleaſant weather, the influence of the equinoctial

equinoctial ſtorms ſtill in ſome degree prevailing. Its opening is thus deſcribed in a poem of Mr. *Warton's*.

Mindful of diſaſter paſt,
And ſhrinking at the northern blaſt,
The ſleety ſtorm returning ſtill,
The morning hoar, the evening chill;
Reluctant comes the timid Spring.
Scarce a bee with airy ring,
Murmurs the bloſſomed boughs around
That cloath the garden's ſouthern bound;
Scarce a ſickly ſtruggling flower;
Decks the rough caſtle's rifted tower;
Scarce the hardy primroſe peeps
From the dark dell's entangled ſteeps.

Fringing the foreſt's devious edge
Half rob'd appears the hawthorn hedge;

Or

Or to the diſtant eye diſplays
Weakly green its budding ſprays.

Early in the month, that welcome gueſt and harbinger of Summer, the ſwallow, returns. The kind firſt ſeen, is the chimney or houſe-ſwallow, known by its long forked tail, and red breaſt. At firſt, here and there one only appears, glancing quick by us, as if ſcarcely able to endure the cold.

The ſwallow for a moment ſeen
Skims in haſte the village green,

But in a few days, their number is much increaſed, and they ſport with ſeeming pleaſure in the warm ſunſhine.

And

And ſee, my Delia, ſee o'er yonder ſtream
Where on the ſunny bank the lambkins play,
Alike attracted to th' enlivening gleam,
The ſtranger ſwallows take their wonted way,
JAGO.

As theſe birds live on inſects, their appearance is a certain proof that ſome of this minute tribe of animals are now got abroad from their winter retreats.

The birds are now buſied in pairing, and building their neſts. As their ſinging is the voice of courtſhip and conjugal love, the concerts of the groves begin to fill with all their various melody. The nightingale, that moſt accompliſhed and enchanting of ſongſters, is heard

ſoon

ſoon after the arrival of the ſwallow. He ſings by day as well as by night; but in the day time, his voice is drowned in the multitude of performers; in the evening it is heard alone; whence the poets have always made the ſong of the nightingale a nocturnal ſerenade.

Sweet bird, that ſhunn'ſt the noiſe of folly.
Moſt muſical, moſt melancholy!
Thee, chauntreſs, oft, the woods among
I woo to hear thy even-ſong. MILTON.

Another of the moſt ſtriking events of this month, is the renewal of the cuckow's note, which is generally heard about the middle of April. This is

ſo

ſo remarkable a circumſtance, that it has commanded attention in all countries; and ſeveral ruſtic ſayings, and the names of ſeveral plants which flower at this time, are derived from it.

Hail beauteous ſtranger of the wood,
Attendant on the Spring!
Now Heaven repairs thy rural ſeat,
And woods thy welcome ſing.

Soon as the daiſy decks the green,
Thy certain voice we hear;
Haſt thou a ſtar to guide thy path,
Or mark the rolling year?

Delightful viſitant! with thee
I hail the time of flowers,
When Heav'n is fill'd with muſic ſweet
Of birds among the bowers.

The ſchool-boy wand'ring in the wood
To pull the flowers ſo gay,
Starts, thy curious voice to hear,
And imitates thy lay.

The cuckow's arrival is regularly preceded ſome days by that of the wryneck, a ſmall bird, ſingular in its attitudes and plumage, and living upon inſects which harbour in the bark of trees, which it extracts by means of its long tongue, furniſhed with a ſharp bony tip. The wryneck has alſo a peculiar note or cry, eaſily diſtinguiſhed by thoſe who have heard it.

Other birds which are ſeen amongſt us only in the warmer months, as the redſtart,

redſtart, whitethroat, and yellow wag-tail, appear in April.

The fiſhes are now inſpired by the ſame enlivening influence which acts on the reſt of animated nature; and in conſequence, again offer themſelves as a prey to the arts of the angler, who returns to his uſual haunt.

Beneath a willow, long forſook,
The fiſher ſeeks his cuſtom'd nook;
And burſting thro' the crackling ſedge
That crowns the current's cavern'd edge,
He ſtartles from the bordering wood
The baſhful wild-duck's early brood.

WARTON.

A conſiderable number of plants flower in this month; in particular, many of the fruit-bearing trees and ſhrubs, the flowers of which are peculiarly termed *bloſſoms*. Theſe form a moſt agreeable ſpectacle, as well on account of their beauty, as of the promiſe they give of future benefits.

Hope waits upon the flowery prime.

It is, however, an anxious time for the poſſeſſor, as the faireſt proſpect of a plentiful increaſe is ſo often blighted. SHAKESPEARE draws a pathetic compariſon from this circumſtance, to paint the deluſive nature of human expectations.

This

This is the ſtate of man; to-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hope, to-morrow bloſſoms,
And bears his bluſhing honours thick upon him,
The third day comes a froſt, a killing froſt.

And MILTON beautifully uſes the ſame ſimile.

Abortive as the firſt-born bloom of Spring,
Nipp'd with the lagging rear of Winter's froſt.

The apricots and peaches lead the way in bloſſoming, and are followed by the cherry and plumb. The black-thorn or ſloe (which is a ſpecies of plumb) alſo enlivens the hedges with its flowers in this month. Thoſe of the lowlier plants which now moſt ſtrike the eye, are the primroſe and wood-

ſorrel under hedges; the wood-anemone in dry woods and thickets; the wood-crowfoot and marſh marygold in wet marſhy places; and the ladyſmock, or cuckow-flower (as ſome call it) in meadows.

The farmer is ſtill buſied in ſowing different ſorts of grain and ſeeds for fodder; for which purpoſe dry weather is yet ſuitable; though plentiful ſhowers at due intervals are deſirable for feeding the young graſs and ſpringing-corn.

MAY.

2

SUMMER

MAY.

For thee, ſweet month, the groves green liveries wear;
If not the firſt, the faireſt in the year:
For thee the Graces lead the dancing hours,
And Nature's ready pencil paints the flowers.

MAY has ever been the favourite month of the year in poetical deſcription; but the praiſes ſo laviſhly beſtowed upon it, took their riſe from climates more ſouthern than ours. In ſuch, it really unites all the ſoft beauties of Spring, with the radiance of Sum-

mer; and has warmth enough to chear and invigorate, without overpowering. With us, eſpecially ſince we have reckoned by the new ſtyle, great part of the month is yet to chill for a perfect enjoyment of the charms of nature; and frequent injury is done to the flowers and young fruits during its courſe, by blights and blaſting winds. May-day, though ſtill obſerved as a rural feſtival, has often little pleaſure to beſtow but that ariſing from the name. In a very elegant poem, entitled *The Tears of old May-day*, this newer rival is thus deſcribed.

Nor

Nor wonder, man, that Nature's baſhful face,
And opening charms her rude embraces fear;
Is ſhe not ſprung of April's wayward race,
The ſickly daughter of th' unripen'd year?

With ſhow'rs and ſunſhine in her fickle eyes,
With hollow ſmiles proclaiming treach'rous peace;
With bluſhes harb'ring in their thin diſguiſe,
The blaſt that riots on the Spring's increaſe.

This month, however, on the whole, is, even in this country ſufficiently profuſe of beauties. The earth is covered with the freſheſt green of the graſs and young corn, and adorned with numerous flowers opening on every ſide. The trees put on all their verdure.

The

hedges are rich in fragrance from the ſnowy bloſſoms of the hawthorn; and the orchards diſplay their higheſt beauty in the delicate bluſh of the apple bloſſoms.

From the moiſt meadow to the wither'd hill,
Led by the breeze, the vivid verdure runs,
And ſwells, and deepens to the cheriſh'd eye,
The haw-thorn whitens: and the juicy groves
Put forth their buds, unfolding by degrees,
Till the whole leafy foreſt ſtands diſplay'd,
In full luxuriance, - - - - - - - - - - -
And the birds ſing conceal'd.

THOMSON.

All this ſcene of beauty and fertility is, however, ſometimes dreadfully ravaged by the blights which peculiarly occur

occur in this month. The miſchief ſeems to be done chiefly by innumerable ſwarms of very ſmall inſects, which are brought by the north-eaſt winds.

If, bruſh'd from Ruſſian wilds, a cutting gale
Riſe not, and ſcatter from his humid wings
The clammy mildew; or, dry-blowing, breathe
Untimely froſt; before whoſe baleful blaſt
The full-blown Spring thro' all her foliage ſhrinks,
Joyleſs and dead, a wide dejected waſte.
For oft, engend'red by the hazy north,
Myriads on myriads, inſect armies warp
Keen in the poiſon'd breeze; and waſteful eat
Thro' buds and bark, into the blacken'd core
Their eager way.

THOMSON.

A cold

A cold and windy May is, however, accounted favourable to the corn; which, if brought forward by early warm weather, is apt to run into ſtalk, while its ears remain thin and light.

The firſt of May is the general time for turning out cattle into the paſtures, though frequently then very bare of graſs. The milk ſoon becomes more copious, and of finer quality, from the juices in the young graſs; and it is in this month that the making of cheeſes is uſually begun in the dairies.

The gardens now yield an agreeable, though immature product, in the young gooſeberries

gooſeberries and currants which are highly acceptable to our tables, now almoſt exhauſted of their ſtore of preſerved fruits.

The leafing of trees is commonly completed in this month. It begins with the aquatic kinds, ſuch as willow, poplar, and alder; and ends with the oak, beech and aſh. Theſe are ſometimes very thin of foliage even at the cloſe of May.

Amongſt the numerous wild flowers, none attracts more notice than the cowſlip.

Whoſe

Whoſe baſhful flowers
Declining, hide their beauty from the ſun,
Nor give their ſpotted boſoms to the gaze
Of haſty paſſenger.

On hedgebanks, the wild germander, of a fine azure blue, is conſpicuous; and the whole ſurface of meadows is covered with the yellow crowfoot. Theſe flowers are alſo called buttercups, and are ſuppoſed by ſome to give the butter its rich yellow tinge at this ſeaſon; but falſely, as the cows will not touch it, on account of its biting quality.

Birds hatch and rear their young principally during this month. The patience

patience and aſſiduity of the female during the taſk of ſitting is admirable; as well as the conjugal affection of the male, who ſings to his mate, and often ſupplies her place; and nothing can exceed the parental tenderneſs of both, when the young ones are brought to light.

Towards the end of May, the bee-hives ſend forth their earlier ſwarms. Theſe colonies conſiſt of the young progeny, now grown too numerous to remain in their parent habitation, and ſufficiently ſtrong and vigorous to provide for themſelves. One queen bee

is

is neceſſary to form each colony; and wherever ſhe flies, they follow. Nature directs them to march in a body in queſt of a new ſettlement, which, if left to their choice, would generally be ſome hollow trunk of a tree. But man, who converts the labours and inſtincts of ſo many animals to his own uſe provides them with a more ſecure dwelling, and repays himſelf with their honey. The early ſwarms are generally the moſt valuable, as they have time enough to lay in a plentiful ſtore of honey for their ſubſiſtence againſt the winter.

This

This month is not a very buſy ſeaſon for the farmer. Some ſowing remains to be done in late years; and in forward ones, the weeds which ſpring up abundantly both in fields and gardens, require to be kept under. The huſbandman now looks forward with anxious hope to the reward of his induſtry.

Be gracious, Heaven! for now laborious man
Has done his part. Ye ſoftening breezes, blow!
Ye ſoftening dews, ye tender ſhowers, deſcend!
And temper all, thou world reviving ſun,
Into the perfect year!

THOMSON.

JUNE.

Now genial ſuns and gentle breezes reign,
And Summer's faireſt ſplendours deck the plain,
Exulting Flora views her new-born roſe,
And all the ground with ſhort-lived beauty glows.

JUNE is really, in this climate, what the poets repreſent May to be—the moſt lovely month of the year. Summer is commenced, and the warm weather thoroughly eſtabliſhed; yet the heats rarely ariſe to exceſs, or interrupt the enjoyment of thoſe pleaſures, which the ſcenes of nature now afford. The

trees are in their fulleſt dreſs; and a profuſion of the gayeſt flowers is every where ſcattered around, which put on all their beauty juſt before they are cut down by the ſcythe, or withered by the heat.

Soft copious ſhowers are extremely welcome towards the beginning of this month, to forward the growth of the herbage. Such an one is thus deſcribed by THOMSON.

Gradual ſinks the breeze
Into a perfect calm; that not a breath
Is heard to quiver through the cloſing woods,
Or ruſtling turn the many twinkling leaves
Of aſpin tall.

At laſt
The clouds conſign their treaſures to the fields;
And, ſoftly ſhaking on the dimpled pool
Preluſive drops, let all their moiſture flow,
In large effuſion, o'er the freſhened world.
The ſtealing ſhower is ſcarce to patter heard,
By ſuch as wander through the foreſt walks,
Beneath th' umbrageous multitude of leaves.
But who can hold the ſhade, while Heaven deſcends
In univerſal bounty, ſhedding herbs,
And fruits, and flowers, on Nature's ample lap.

One of the earlieſt rural employments of this month is the ſhearing of ſheep; a buſineſs of much importance in various parts of the kingdom, where wool is one of the moſt valuable products. England has for many ages been famous for its breeds of ſheep,

which yield wool of various qualities, ſuited to different branches of the woollen manufactory. The downs of Dorſetſhire, and other ſouthern and weſtern counties, feed ſheep whoſe fine ſhort fleeces are employed in making the beſt broad cloths. The coarſer wool of Yorkſhire and the northern counties is uſed in the narrow cloths. The large Leiceſterſhire and Lincolnſhire ſheep are clothed with long thick flakes, proper for the hoſier's uſe: and every other kind is valuable for ſome particular purpoſe.

The ſeaſon for ſheep-ſhearing commences as ſoon as the warm weather is

ſo

ſo far ſettled, that the ſheep may without danger, lay aſide great part of their cloathing. The following tokens are given by DYER in his *Fleece*, to mark out the time.

If verdant elder ſpreads
Her ſilver flowers; if humble daiſies yield
To yellow crowfoot and luxuriant graſs,
Gay ſhearing time approaches.

Before ſhearing, the ſheep undergo the operation of waſhing, in order to free the wool from the foulneſs it has contracted.

Upon the brim
Of a clear river, gently drive the flock,
And plunge them one by one into the flood:
Plung'd in the flood, not long the ſtruggler ſinks

With his white flakes, that gliſten thro' the tide;
The ſturdy ruſtic, in the middle wave,
Awaits to ſeize him riſing; one arm bears
His lifted head above the limpid ſtream,
While the full-clammy fleece the other laves
Around, labourous, with repeated toil;
And then reſigns him to the ſunny bank,
Where bleating loud, he ſhakes his dripping locks.

DYER.

The ſhearing itſelf is conducted with a degree of ceremony and rural dignity; and is a kind of feſtival, as well as a piece of labour.

At laſt, of ſnowy white, the gathered flocks
Are in the wattled pen innumerous preſs'd,
Head above head: and, rang'd in luſty rows
The ſhepherds ſit and whet the ſounding ſhears,
The houſewife waits to roll her fleecy ſtores,
With all her gay-dreſt maids attending round.

One,

One, chief, in gracious dignity enthron'd,
Shines o'er the reſt, the paſtoral queen, and rays
Her ſmiles, ſweet-beaming, on her ſhepherd-king.
A ſimple ſcene! yet hence BRITANNIA ſees
Her ſolid grandeur riſe: hence ſhe commands
Th' exalted ſtores of every brighter clime,
The treaſures of the ſun without his rage.

THOMSON.

A profuſion of fragrance now ariſes from the fields of clover in flower. Of this plant there are the varieties of white and purple. The latter is ſometimes called honeyſuckle, from the quantity of ſweet juice contained in the tube of the flower, whence the bees extract much of their honey.

A ſtill

A ſtill more delicious odour proceeds from the beans in bloſſom; of which THOMSON ſpeaks in this rapturous language.

> Long let us walk
> Where the breeze blows from yon extended field
> Of bloſſom'd beans. Arabia cannot boaſt
> A fuller gale of joy, than, liberal, thence
> Breathes through the ſenſe, and takes the raviſh'd ſoul.

Beans and peas belong to a large natural family of plants, called the papilionaccous, or butterfly-ſhaped-bloſſom, and the leguminous, from the pods they bear. Almoſt all theſe in our climate

mate afford wholſome food for man or beaſt. Of ſome, the ſeeds alone are uſed, as of pea and bean; of ſome, the entire pod, as of French or kidney-bean; and of ſome, the whole plant, as of clover, lucern or vetch.

In the hedges, the place of the hawthorn is ſupplied by the flowers of the hip or dog roſe, the different hues of which, from a light bluſh to a deep crimſon, form a moſt elegant variety of colour. Some time after, the woodbine or honey-ſuckle begins to blow; and this, united with the roſe, gives our hedges their higheſt beauty and fragrance.

The

The ſeveral kinds of corn come into ear and flower during this month; as do likewiſe numerous ſpecies of graſs, which, indeed, are all ſo many leſs kinds of corn; or rather, corn is only a larger ſort of graſs. It is peculiar to all this tribe of plants, to have long, ſlender leaves, a jointed ſtalk, and a flowering head either in the form of a cloſe ſpike, like wheat, or a looſe bunch, like oats. The head conſiſts of numerous huſky flowers, each of which bears a ſingle ſeed.

In the large kinds, which are uſually termed corn, theſe ſeeds are big enough

to

to be worth ſeperating; and they form the chief article of food of almoſt all the civilized nations of the world. In Europe, the principal kinds of corn are wheat, rye, barley and oats. In Aſia, rice is moſt cultivated: in Africa, and the Weſt-Indies, maize or Indian corn.

The ſmaller kinds, called graſſes, are moſt valuable for their leaves and ſtalks, or herbage, which makes the principal food of all domeſtic cattle. This, cut down and dried, is hay, the winter proviſion of cattle in all the temperate and northern climates. Graſs is moſt

moſt fit to cut after it is in ear, but before its ſeeds are ripened. If it be ſuffered to grow too long, it will loſe all its nutritious juices, and become like the ſtraw of corn. The latter part of June is the beginning of hay-harveſt for the ſouthern and middle parts of the kingdom. This is one of the buſieſt and moſt agreeable of rural occupations. Both ſexes and all ages are engaged in it. The fragrance of the new mown hay, the gaiety of all ſurrounding objects, and the genial warmth of the weather, all conſpire to render it a ſeaſon of pleaſure and delight to the beholder

holder. It is at this ſeaſon that we can peculiarly feel the beauty of theſe charming lines of MILTON.

As one who long in populous city, pent,
Where houſes thick and ſewers annoy the air,
Forth iſſuing on a ſummer's morn to breathe
Among the pleaſant villages and farms
Adjoin'd, from each thing met conceives delight,
The ſmell of grain, or tedded graſs, or kine,
Or dairy, each rural ſight, each rural ſound.

On the twenty-firſt of June happens the ſummer-ſolſtice, or longeſt day. At this time, in the northern parts of the iſland, there is ſcarcely any night; the twilight continuing almoſt from the ſetting to the riſing of the ſun; ſo

that

that it is light enough at midnight to ſee to read. This ſeaſon is alſo properly called Midſummer, though, indeed, the greateſt heats are not yet arrived; and there is more warm weather after it than before.

The principal ſeaſon for taking that delicate fiſh, the mackrel, is in this month.

Currants and gooſeberries begin to ripen about the end of June, and prove extremely refreſhing as the parching heats advance.

Though the other ſenſes are ſo much gratified in this month, the ear loſes moſt

of

of its entertainment, as the birds, now the ſeaſon of courtſhip and rearing their young is paſt, no longer exerciſe their muſical powers.

The groves, the fields, the meadows, no more
With melody reſound, 'Tis ſilence all,
As if the lovely ſongſters, overwhelm'd
By bounteous nature's plenty lay intranc'd
In drowſy lethargy

After the end of June, an attentive obſerver hears no birds except the ſtone curlew (thick-kneed plover of Pennant) whiſtling late at night; the yellow-hammer, goldfinch, and golden creſted wren, now and then chirping. The cuckow's note ceaſes about this time.

JULY.

Deep to the root
Of vegetation parch'd, the cleaving fields
And ſlippery lawn an arid hue diſcloſe;
Echo no more returns the chearful ſound
Of ſharp'ning ſcythe; the mower ſinking heaps
O'er him the humid hay, with flowers perfum'd.

As January is the coldeſt, July is the hotteſt month of the year. The direct influence of the ſun, indeed, is continually diminiſhing after the ſummer-ſolſtice; but the earth and air have been ſo thoroughly heated, that the warmth which they retain more than compen-

ſates for a time, the diminution of ſolar rays. The effects of this weather upon the face of nature ſoon become manifeſt. All the flowers of the former month ſoon loſe their beauty, ſhrivel, and fall; at the ſame time their leaves and ſtalk loſe their verdure, and the whole plant haſtens to decay. Many plants, however, do not begin to flower till July: theſe are, particularly, the aromatic; the ſucculent or thick-leaved; ſeveral of the aquatic; and of thoſe called compound-flowered, in which many florets are collected into one head, as thiſtle, ſowthiſtle, hawkweed, &c. The lily is one of the principal ornaments

ments of gardens in this month; and with its delicate white flowers, gives an agreeable ſenſation of coolneſs to the eye.

The animal creation ſeem oppreſſed with languor during this hot ſeaſon, and either ſeek the receſſes of woods, or reſort to pools and ſtreams to cool their bodies, and quench their thirſt.

On the graſſy bank
Some ruminating lie; while others ſtand
Half in the flood, and often bending ſip
The circling ſurface. In the middle droops
The ſtrong laborious ox, of honeſt front,
Which incompos'd he ſhakes; and from his ſides
The troublous inſects laſhes with his tail,
Returning ſtill.

The inſect tribe, however, are peculiarly active and vigorous in the hotteſt weather. Theſe minute creatures are for the moſt part annual, being hatched in the Spring, and dying at the approach of Winter: they have therefore no time to loſe in indolence, but muſt make the moſt of their ſhort exiſtence; eſpecially as their moſt perfect ſtate continues only during a part of their lives. All inſects undergo three changes, in each of which they are transformed to a totally different appearance. From the egg, they firſt turn into *catterpillars* or *maggots*, when they crawl upon many feet, and are extremely voracious, many

kinds

kinds of them doing much miſchief in the gardens, and ſometimes devouring the leaves of the trees, and even the herbage on the ground. This is their ſtate in the Spring. They next become *aurelias* or *chryſaliſes*, when they reſemble an infant cloſely wrapt in ſwaddling clothes; being motionleſs, taking no nouriſhment, and indeed, having no appearance of living creatures. From this ſtate they burſt forth into the *perfect inſect*, ſhining in all its colours, furniſhed with wings, full of activity, capable of propagating its ſpecies, and feeding for the moſt part, on thin liquid aliments, ſuch as the honey of flowers,

and juices of animals. In this ſtate moſt of them continue but a ſhort time. The male impregnates the female; ſhe lays her eggs, and they both die.

Wak'd by his warmer ray, the reptile young
Come wing'd abroad; by the light air upborne,
Lighter, and full of ſoul. From every chink,
And ſecret corner, where they ſlept away
The wintry ſtorms; or riſing from their tombs,
To higher life; by myriads, forth at once,
Swarming they pour; of all the vary'd hues
Their beauty-beaming parent can diſcloſe,
Ten thouſand forms! ten thouſand different tribes!
People the blaze. To ſunny waters ſome
By fatal inſtinct fly; where on the pool
They, ſportive, wheel; or, ſailing down the ſtream,
Are ſnatch'd immediate by the quick-ey'd trout,

Or

Or darting ſalmon. Thro' the green-wood glade
Some love to ſtray; there lodg'd, amus'd and fed,
In the freſh leaf. Luxurious, others make
The meads their choice, and viſit every flower,
And every latent herb; for the ſweet taſk,
To propagate their kinds, and where to wrap,
In what ſoft beds, their young yet undiſclos'd,
Employs their tender care. Some to the houſe,
The fold and dairy, hungry, bend their flight;
Sip round the pail, or taſte the curdling cheeſe.

THOMSON.

About the middle of this month the ſhoals of that migratory fiſh, the pilchard, begin to appear off the coaſt of Cornwall.

The luxury of cooling ſhades is now peculiarly grateful; and indeed is ſcarcely

ſcarcely deſired in this climate longer than a few weeks at the height of Summer.

Welcome, ye ſhades! ye bowery thickets hail!
Ye lofty pines! ye venerable oaks!
Ye aſhes wild, reſounding over the ſteep!
D licious is your ſhelter to the ſoul,
As to the hunted hart, the ſallying ſpring.

THOMSON.

Bathing, too, is a delightful amuſement at this ſeaſon; and happy is the ſwimmer, who alone is able to enjoy the full pleaſure of this healthful exerciſe. The power of habit to improve the natural faculties is in nothing more apparemt than in the art of ſwimming. Man, without practice, is utterly unable

to

to ſupport himſelf in the water. In theſe northern countries, the ſeaſon for pleaſant bathing being ſhort, few in proportion can ſwim at all, and to thoſe who have acquired the art, it is a laborious and fatiguing exerciſe. Whereas, in the tropical countries, where from their very infancy both ſexes are continnally plunging into the water, they become a ſort of amphibious creatures, ſwimming and diving with the utmoſt eaſe, and for hours together without intermiſſion.

The exceſſive heats of this period of the year cauſe ſuch an evaporation from

from

the ſurface of the earth and waters, that after ſome continuance of dry weather, large heavy clouds are formed, which, at length, let fall their collected liquor in extremely copious ſhowers, which frequently beat down the full-grown corn, and ſometimes deluge the country with ſudden floods. Thunder and lightning generally accompany theſe Summer ſtorms. Lightning is a collection of electric fire drawn from the heated air and earth, and accumulated in the clouds, which, at length overcharged, ſuddenly let go their contents in the form of broad flaſhes or fiery

fiery darts. Theſe are attracted again by the earth, and often intercepted by buildings, trees, and other elevated ob- which are ſhattered by the ſhock. Thunder is the noiſe occaſioned by the explolion, and therefore always *follows* the lightning; the ſound travelling ſlower to our ears, than the light to our eyes. Juſt the ſame thing happens when a gun is fired at a diſtance. When we hear the thunder, therefore, all danger from that flaſh of lightning is over; and thunder, though ſo awful and tremendous to the ear, is, of itſelf, entirely harmleſs.

The effects of the great heat on the human body are agreeably allayed by the ×

× now go to page 95.

The Paging is wrong.

The farmers chief employment in July, is getting home the various products of the earth. It is the principal hay-month in the northern parts of the kingdom; and the work-people ſuffer much fatigue from the exceſſive heat to which they are expoſed.

Flax and hemp are pulled in this month. Theſe plants are cultivated in various parts of Europe, more than in England. The ſtalks of both are full of tough fibres or ſtrings, which, ſeparated and prepared in a particular manner, become fit for ſpinning into thread. Of flax, linen is made, from

the ×

now go to page 96.

the various wholeſome fruits which Providence offers at this ſeaſon for the uſe of man. Thoſe which are now ripe, are of all the moſt cooling and refreſhing; as currants, gooſeberries, raſpberries, ſtrawberries and cherries. Theſe are no leſs ſalutary and uſeful, than the richeſt products of the warmer climates.

Hens moult, or loſe their feathers, during this month. The ſmaller birds do not moult ſo early; but all renew their plumage before Winter, when they are in their fineſt and warmeſt cloathing.

Young partridges are found at this time among the corn.

The ×

× now go to page 94.

the fineſt cambric, to the coarſeſt canvaſs. Hemp is uſed for coarſe cloth only, ſuch as ſacking; it is alſo twiſted into ropes and cables.

The corn-harveſt begins in July in the ſouthern parts of the iſland; but Auguſt is the principal harveſt-month for the whole kingdom.

AUGUST.

AUTUMN

AUGUST.

Fair Plenty now begins her golden reign;
The yellow fields thick wave with ripened grain;
Joyous the ſwains renew their ſultry toils,
And bear in triumph home the harveſt's wealthy ſpoils.

IN the beginning of this month, the weather is ſtill hot, and uſually calm and fair. What remained to be perfected by the powerful influence of the ſun, is daily advancing to maturity. The farmer now ſees the principal object of his culture, and the chief ſource of his riches, waiting only for the hand of

the gatherer. Of the ſeveral kinds of grain, rye and oats are uſually the firſt ripened; but this varies according to the time of following; and ſome of every ſpecies may be ſeen fit for cutting at the ſame time.

Every fair day is now of great importance; ſince, when the corn is once ripe, it is liable to continual damage while ſtanding, either from the ſhedding of the ſeeds, from the depredations of birds, or from ſtorms. The utmoſt diligence is therefore uſed by the careful huſbandman to get it in, and labourers are hired from all quarters to haſten the work.

Pour'd from the villages, a numerous train
Now ſpreads o'er all the fields. In form'd array
The reapers move, nor ſhrink for heat or toil,
By emulation urg'd. Others diſpers'd
Or bind in ſheaves, or load or guide the wain
That tinkles as it paſſes. Far behind,
Old age and infancy with careful hand
Pick up each ſtraggling ear.

This pleaſing harveſt-ſcene is beheld in its perfection only in the open-field countries, where the ſight can take in at once an uninterrupted extent of land waving with corn, and a multitude of people engaged in the various parts of the labour. It is a proſpect equally delightful to the eye and to the heart, and which ought to inſpire every ſentiment

of benevolence to our fellow creatures, and gratitude to our Creator.

Be not too narrow, husbandmen! but fling
From the full sheaf, with charitable stealth,
The liberal handful. Think, oh! grateful, think,
How good the God of harvest is to you,
Who pours abundance o'er your flowing fields.

THOMPSON.

In a late season, or where favourable opportunities of getting in the harvest have been neglected, the corn on the ground often suffers greatly from heavy storms of wind and rain. It is beaten to the earth; the seeds are shed, or rotted by the moisture; or, if the weather continues warm, the corn *grows*, that is, the

the ſeeds begin to germinate, and put out ſhoots. Grain in this ſtate is ſweet and moiſt: it ſoon ſpoils on keeping; and bread made from it is clammy and unwholeſome.

Harveſt concludes with the field peas and beans, which are ſuffered to become quite dry and hard before they are cut down. The blackneſs of the bean pods and ſtalks is diſagreeable to the eye, though the crop is valuable to the farmer. In theſe countries they are uſed as food for cattle only, as the nouriſhment they afford, though ſtrong, is groſs and heavy

The rural feſtival of *harveſt home* is an extremely natural one, and has been obſerved in almoſt all ages and countries. What can more gladden the heart, than to ſee the long-expected products of the year, which have been the cauſe of ſo much anxiety, now ſafely houſed, and beyond the reach of injury?

Inwardly ſmiling the proud farmer views
The riſing pyramids that grace his yard,
And counts his large increaſe; his barns are ſtor'd,
And groaning ſtaddles bend beneath their load.
SOMERVILLE.

The poor labourer, too, who has toiled in ſecuring another's wealth, juſtly expects to partake of the happineſs.

The

The jovial harveſt-ſupper cheers his heart, and prepares him to begin without murmuring the labours of another year.

This month is the ſeaſon of another kind of harveſt in ſome parts of England, which is the *hop picking*. The hop is a climbing plant, ſometimes growing wild in hedges, and cultivated on account of its uſe in making malt liquors. They are planted in regular rows, and poles for them to run upon. When the poles are covered to the top, nothing can make a more elegant appearance than one of theſe hop-gardens. At the time of gathering, the poles are taken up with

the plants clinging to them, and the ſcaly flowering heads, which is the part uſed, are carefully picked off. Theſe are a finely flavoured bitter, which they readily impart to hot water. They improve the taſte of beer, and make it keep better. Kent, Suſſex, and Worceſterſhire, are the counties moſt famous for the growth of hops.

The number of plants in flower is now very ſenſibly diminiſhed. Thoſe of the former months are running faſt to ſeed; and few new ones ſucceed. The uncultivated heaths and commons are now, however, in their chief beauty from the flowers of the different kinds of

heath

heath or ling with which they are covered, ſo as to ſpread a rich purple hue over the whole ground. Many of the fern tribe now ſhew the ruſty-coloured dots on the backs of the leaves, which are their parts of fructification.

Some of the choiceſt wall-fruits are now coming into ſeaſon.

The ſunny wall
Preſents the downy peach, the ſhining plum,
The ruddy fragrant nectarine, and dark
Beneath his ample leaf, the luſcious fig.

About the middle of Auguſt, the largeſt of the ſwallow tribe, the ſwift or long wing diſappears. As there can yet be no want of inſect food, and the weather

weather is ſtill warm, they cannot be ſuppoſed to retire to holes or caverns and become torpid for the Winter; and as they are ſo admirably formed for flight, it can ſcarcely be doubted that they now migrate to ſome diſtant country. Nearly at the ſame time, rooks no longer paſs the nights from home, but rooſt in their neſt trees.

The red-breaſt, one of our fineſt tho' commoneſt ſongſters, renews his muſic about the end of the month.

SEPTEMBER.

Now ſoftened ſuns a mellow luſtre ſhed,
The laden orchards glow with tempting red,
On hazel boughs the cluſters hang embrown'd,
And with the ſportſman's war the new-ſhorn
fields reſound,

THIS is, in general, a very agreeable month, the diſtinguiſhing ſoftneſs and ſerenity of Autumn, with its deep blue ſkies, prevailing through great part of it. The days are now very ſenſibly ſhortened; and the mornings and evenings are chill and damp, though the warmth is ſtill conſiderable in the middle

middle of the day. This variation of temperature is one cauſe why Autumn is an unhealthy time, eſpecially in the warmer climates and in moiſt ſituations. Thoſe who are obliged to be abroad early or late in this ſeaſon, ſhould be guarded by warm cloathing againſt the cold fogs.

In late years, a good deal of corn is abroad, eſpecially in the northern parts of the iſland, at the beginning of September; but it is ſuppoſed that, in general, all will be got in, or at leaſt cut, by this time; for the firſt of the month is the day on which it is allowed by law to begin ſhooting patridges. Theſe birds

make

make their neſts in corn-fields, where they bring up their young, which run after the parents like chickens. While the corn is ſtanding, they have a ſafe refuge in it; but after harveſt, when the ſportſman may freely range over the ſtubble with his pointers, they are either obliged to take to the wing, and offer themſelves to the ſhooter's aim; or are ſurrounded by nets on the ground, and thus taken in whole coveys.

In his mid career, the ſpaniel ſtruck,
Stiff, by the tainted gale, with open noſe,
Outſtretch'd, and finely ſenſible, draws full,
Fearful and cautious, on the latent prey;
As in the ſun the circling covey baſk

Their

Their varied plumes, and watchful every way
Thro' the rough ſtubble turn the ſecret eye.
THOMSON.

A remarkable product of the earth collected in this month is *ſaffron*.—This is cultivated in various parts of Europe, but none is ſuperior to that grown in England, chiefly in the counties of Eſſex and Cambridge. The ſaffron-plant is a ſpecies of crocus, which is planted in July, and the flowers gathered in September. The part which alone is uſed, is the fine branched filaments on the inſide of the flower, called the Chives. It is properly an expanſion of the female part of fructification,

or

or *piſtil*. Theſe are picked off, dried, and preſſed together in cakes. They are of a high orange colour, and have a very ſtrong aromatic odour. Saffron is uſed in medicine as a cordial; and its flavour was formerly much eſteemed in cookery. It gives a fine deep yellow dye.

Very few other flowers open in this month; and it is to the ripening fruits that we are chiefly indebted for variegation of colour in the landſcape of nature.

The labours of the huſbandman have but a very ſhort intermiſſion; for no ſooner

ſooner is the harveſt gathered in, but the fields are again plowed up and prepared for the winter corn, rye and wheat, which is ſown during this month and the next.

At this time it is proper to ſtraiten the entrance of bee-hives, that waſps and drones may have leſs opportunity of getting in, and devouring the honey.

Early in September, a harveſt of a peculiar kind is offered to the inhabitants of our ſea-coaſts, in the immenſe ſhoals of herrings, which travelling in a prodigious army from the neighbour-

hood

hood of the arctic circle, after many diviſions and ſub-diviſions, at length appear in the narrow ſeas which encompaſs our iſland. Yarmouth is the principal ſtation from whence our fiſhermen proceed in ſearch of this valuable booty.

Towards the end of this month, the chimney or common ſwallow entirely diſappears. There are various opinions concerning the manner in which theſe birds diſpoſe of themſelves during the winter; ſome imagining that they all fly away to diſtant ſouthern regions, where inſect-food is at all times to be met with;

others, that they retire to holes and caverns, or even ſink to the bottom of ponds and rivers, where they paſs the winter months in a torpid and apparently lifeleſs ſtate. That many of them migrate to other countries, ſeems ſufficiently proved. But ſome, probably, always ſtay behind, which are the younger broods, or ſmaller kinds, that are incapable of ſo long a flight. For ſome time before their departure, they begin to collect in flocks, ſettling on trees, baſking on the roofs of buildings, or gathering round towers and ſteeples, from whence they take ſhort excurſions, as if to try their powers of flight.

When

When Autumn ſcatters his departing gleams,
Warn'd of approaching Winter, gathered, play
The ſwallow-people; and toſs'd wide around,
O'er the calm ſky, in convolution ſwift,
The feathered eddy floats: rejoicing once,
Ere to their wintry ſlumbers they retire;
In cluſters clung, beneath the mould'ring bank.
And where, unpierc'd by froſt, the cavern ſweats,
Or rather into warmer climes convey'd.
With other kindred birds of ſeaſon, there
They twitter chearful, till the vernal months
Invite them welcome back: for, thronging, now
Innumerous wings are in commotion all.

THOMPSON.

Not only the ſwallow tribe, but many other ſmall birds which feed on inſects, diſappear on the approach of cold weather, when the inſects themſelves are no longer to be met with.

On the other hand, ſome birds arrive at this ſeaſon from ſtill more northerly countries to ſpend the winter with us. The fieldfare and redwing, whoſe departure was mentioned in March, return about the end of September. They feed chiefly on the berries with which our woods and hedges are plentifully ſtored all the winter.

Thoſe ſweet and mellow-toned ſongſters, the wood-lark, thruſh and blackbird, now begin their autumnal muſic.

The moſt uſeful fruit this country affords, the apple, ſucceſſively ripens, according to its different kinds, from July to September or October; but the principal

principal harveſt of them is about the cloſe of this month. They are now gathered for our Engliſh vintage, the *cyder making*, which in ſome counties is a buſy and important employment.

Autumn paints
Auſonian hills with grapes, whilſt Engliſh plains
Bluſh with pomaceous harveſts, breathing ſweets.
O let me now, when the kind early dew
Unlocks th' emboſom'd odours, walk among
The well-rang'd files of trees, whoſe full-aged ſtore
Diffuſe ambroſial ſtreams.
. . . . . .
Now, now's the time; ere haſty ſuns forbid
To work, diſburthen thou thy ſapleſs wood
Of its rich progeny; the turgid fruit
Abounds with mellow liquor.

PHILIPS.

The apples are taken either freſh from the trees, or after they have lain a while to mellow, and cruſhed in a mill, and then preſſed, till all their juice is extracted. This is ſet to ferment, whence it becomes *cyder*, which may properly be called *apple-wine*. Pears treated in the ſame manner yield a vinous liquor, called *perry*. Theſe are the common drink in the counties where they are chiefly made.

Another agreeable product both of our thickets and gardens, the hazel-nut, is fit for gathering at this time.

Ye virgins come. For you their lateſt ſong
The woodlands raiſe; the cluſtering nuts for you

The

The lover finds amid the ſecret ſhade;
And, where they burniſh on the topmoſt bough,
With active vigour cruſhes down the tree,
Or ſhakes them ripe from the reſigning huſk.

The acorns now begin to fall from the oak, and the nuts from the beech; both which have the name of *maſt*. Theſe, in countries where there are large foreſts, afford a plentiful food to ſwine, which are turned into the woods at this ſeaſon.

The autumnal equinox, when day and night is again equal over the whole globe happens about the twenty-third of September. This, as well as the vernal, is generally attended with ſtorms, which

throw down much of the fruit yet remaining on the trees.

By the end of this month, the leaves of many trees have their verdure impaired, and begin to put on their autumnal colours; which, however, are not complete till the enſuing month.

OCTOBER.

OCTOBER.

The fading many coloured woods,
Shade deep'ning over ſhade, the country round
Imbrown ; a crowded umbrage, duſk and dun,
Of every hue, from wan declining green
To ſooty dark.

THE great buſineſs of nature, with reſpect to the vegetable creation, at this ſeaſon, is *diſſemination*. Plants, having gone through the progreſſive ſtages of ſpringing, flowering, and ſeeding, have at length brought to maturity the rudiments of a future progeny, which are now to be committed to the foſtering boſom

boſom of the earth. This being done, the parent vegetable, if of the *herbaceous* kind, either totally dies, or periſhes as far as it roſe above ground: if a *tree* or *ſhrub*, it loſes all its tender parts which the Spring and Summer had put forth. Seeds are ſcattered by the hand of nature in various manners. The winds which at this time ariſe, diſperſe far and wide many ſeeds which are curiouſly furniſhed with feathers or wings for this purpoſe. Hence plants with ſuch ſeeds are, of all the moſt univerſally to be met with; as dandelion, groundſel, ragwort, thiſtles, &c. Other ſeeds, by the means of hooks, lay hold

of

of paſſing animals, and are thus carried to diſtant places. The common burs are examples of this contrivance. Many are contained in berries, which being eaten by birds, the ſeeds are diſcharged again uninjured, and grow where they happen to light. Thus carefully has nature provided for the diſtribution and propagation of plants.

The gloom of the falling year is in ſome meaſure enlivened, during this month eſpecially, by the variety of colours, ſome lively and beautiful, put on by the fading leaves of trees and ſhrubs.

Thoſe virgin leaves of pureſt vivid green,
Which charm'd ere yet they trembled on the trees,

Now

Now cheer the ſober landſcape in decay:
The lime firſt-fading; and the golden birch,
With bark of ſilver hue; the moſs-grown oak,
Tenaceous of its leaves of ruſſet-brown;
Th' enſanguin'd dogwood; and a thouſand tints
Which Flora, dreſſed in all her pride of bloom,
Could ſcarcely equal, decorate the groves.

To theſe temporary colours are added the more durable ones of ripened berries, a variety of which now enrich our hedges. Among theſe are particularly diſtinguiſhed the hip, the fruit of the wild roſe; the haw, of the hawthorn; the ſloe, of the blackthorn; the blackberry, of the bramble; and the berries of the elder, holly, and woody nightſhade. Theſe are a providential ſupply

for

for the birds during the Winter ſeaſon; and it is ſaid that they are moſt plentiful when the enſuing Winter is to be moſt ſevere.

The common martin, whoſe neſts, hung under the eaves of our houſes, afford ſo agreeable a ſpectacle of parental fondneſs and aſſiduity, uſually diſappears in October. As this, though one of the ſmalleſt of the ſwallow kind, ſtays the lateſt, its emigration to diſtant climates is leſs probable than that of the others. The ſand martin, which breeds in holes in the ſandy banks of rivers, and about cliffs and quarries, moſt probably

bably paſſes the Winter in a torpid ſtate in thoſe holes.

The royſton or hooded crow, which migrates northwards to breed, returns about the beginning of this month.—At the ſame time the woodcock is firſt ſeen on our eaſtern coaſts; though the great body of them does not arrive till November or December. Various kinds of water-fowl which breed in the northern regions approach our coaſts at this ſeaſon. About the middle of the month, wild geeſe quit the fens, and go up to the rye lands, where they pluck the young corn.

The

The weather about this time is ſometimes extremely miſty, with a perfect calm. The ground is covered with ſpiders webs innumerable, croſſing the paths, and extended from one ſhrub to another.

Now by the cool declining year condens'd,
Deſcend the copious exhalations, check'd
As up the middle ſky unſeen they ſtole,
And roll the doubling fogs around the hill.
. . . . . Thence expanding far,
The huge duſk, gradual, ſwallows up the plain:
Vaniſh the woods; the dim-ſeen river ſeems
Sullen and ſlow, to roll the miſty wave.
Even in the height of noon oppreſt, the ſun
Sheds weak, and blunt, his wide-refracted ray;
Whence glaring oft, with many a broaden'd orb
He frights the nations. Indiſtinct on earth,
Seen thro' the turbid air, beyond the life

Objects

Objects appear; and, wilder'd, o'er the waſte
The ſhepherd ſtalks gigantic.

THOMSON.

This month is the heighth of the hunting ſeaſon. The temperature of the weather is peculiarly favourable to the ſport; and as the products of the earth are all got in, little damage is done by the horſemen in purſuing their chace acroſs the fields.

All now is free as air, and the gay pack
In the rough briſtly ſtubbles range unblam'd;
No widow's tears o'erflow, no ſecret curſe
Swells in the farmer's breaſt, which his pale lips
Trembling conceal, by his fierce landlord aw'd:
But courteous now he levels every fence,
Joins in the common cry, and halloos loud,
Charm'd with the rattling thunder of the field.

SOMERVILLE.

It is uſually in October that the bee-hives are deſpoiled of their honey. As long as flowers are plentiful, the bees continue adding to their ſtore; but when theſe fail, they are obliged to begin feeding on the honey they have already made. From this time, therefore, the hive grows leſs and leſs valuable. Its condition is judged of by its weight. The common method of getting at the honey, is by deſtroying the bees with the fumes of burning brimſtone. The humane THOMPSON exclaims againſt this practice.

Ah ſee where robb'd, and murder'd, in that pit
Lies the ſtill heaving hive! at evening ſnatch'd,

Beneath the cloud of guilt-concealing night,
And fix'd o'er ſulphur; while, not dreaming ill,
The happy people, in their waxen cells,
Sat tending public cares, and planning ſchemes
Of temperance, for Winter poor: rejoiced
To mark, full flowing round, their copious ſtores.
Sudden the dark oppreſſive ſteam aſcends;
And, uſed to milder ſcents, the tender race,
By thouſands, tumble from their honeyed domes,
Convolv'd, and agonizing in the duſt,
And was it then for this you roam'd the Spring,
Intent from flower to flower? for this you toil'd
Ceaſeleſs the burning Summer-heats away?
For this in Autumn ſearch'd the blooming waſte,
Nor loſt one ſunny gleam? for this ſad fate?

This cruel neceſſity may be prevented by uſing hives or boxes properly contrived; or by employing fumes which will ſtupefy

ſtupefy but not kill them. In this caſe, however, enough of the honey muſt be leſt for their ſubſiſtence during the Winter.

In moſt of the wine countries of Europe, the *vintage* takes place in October. The grape is one of the lateſt fruits in ripening. When gathered, they are immediately preſſed, and the juice is fermented, like that of apples in making cyder. A great variety of wines are produced from the different kinds of grapes, and the diverſity of climates in which they grow. In England, this fruit does not ripen conſtantly enough, to be worth

cultivation for the purpoſe of making wine.

This month is particularly choſen, on account of its mild temperature, for the brewing of malt liquor deſigned for long keeping, which is therefore commonly called *old October*.

The farmer continues to ſow his winter corn during this month; and wheat is frequently not all ſown till the end of it. When the weather is too wet for this buſineſs he plows up the ſtubble fields, for winter fallows. Acorns are ſown for young plantations at this time; and foreſt and fruit trees are planted.

At

At the very close of the month, a few flowers still cheer the eye; and there is a second blow of some kinds, particularly of the woodbine. But the scent of all these late flowers is comparatively faint.

NOVEMBER.

NOVEMBER.

Now the leaf
Inceſſant ruſtles from the mournful grove;
Oft ſtartling ſuch as, ſtudious, walk below;
And ſlowly circles thro' the waving air.

AS the preceding month was marked by the *change*, ſo this is diſtinguiſhed by the *fall* of the leaf. This laſt is ſo ſtriking a circumſtance, that the whole declining ſeaſon of the year is often, in common language named the *Fall*. There is ſomething extremely melancholy

choly in this gradual proceſs, by which the trees are ſtripped of all their beauty, and leſt ſo many monuments of decay and deſolation. The firſt of poets has deduced from this quick ſucceſſion of ſpringing and falling leaves, an apt compariſon for the fugitive races of men.

Like leaves of trees the race of man is found,
Now green in youth, now withering on the ground,
Another race the following Spring ſupplies
They fall ſucceſſive, and ſucceſſive riſe:
So generations in their courſe decay,
So flouriſh theſe, when thoſe are paſt away.

POPE's HOMER.

This

This loſs of verdure, together with the ſhortened days, the diminiſhed warmth, and frequent rains, juſtify the title of the *gloomy month of November:* and other animals ſeem to ſympathize with man in feeling it as ſuch.

In penſive guiſe
Oft let me wander o'er the ruſſet mead,
And thro' the ſaddened grove, where ſcarce is heard
One dying ſtrain, to cheer the woodman's toil.
Haply ſome widow'd ſongſter pours his plaint,
Far, in faint warblings, thro' the tawny copſe.
While congregated thruſhes, linnets, larks,
And each wild throat, whoſe artleſs ſtrains ſo late
Swell'd all the muſic of the ſwarming ſhades.
Robb'd of their tuneful ſouls, now ſhivering ſit
On the dead tree, a dull deſpondent flock;

With

With not a brightneſs waving o'er their plumes,
And nought ſave chattering diſcord in their note.

THOMSON.

Intervals of clear and pleaſant weather, however, frequently occur and, in general, the autumnal months are, in our iſland, ſofter and leſs variable than the correſpondent ones in Spring. It long continues.

The pale deſcending year, yet pleaſing ſtill.

In fair weather, the mornings are ſomewhat froſty; but the hoar froſt or thin ice ſoon vaniſhes after ſunriſe.

The lengthened night elaps'd the morning ſhines
Serene in all her dewy beauty bright,
Unfolding fair the laſt autumnal day.
And now the mounting ſun diſpels the fog;

The

The rigid hoar froſt melts before his beam;
And hung on every ſpray, on every blade
Of graſs, the myriad dew-drops twinkle round.

THOMSON.

High winds frequently happen in November, which at once ſtrip the trees of their faded leaves, and reduce them to their winter ſtate of nakedneſs.

O'er the ſky the leafy deluge ſtreams;
Till choak'd and matted with the dreary ſhower,
The foreſt-walks, at every riſing gale,
Roll wide the wither'd waſte, and whiſtle bleak.

THOMSON.

Flocks of wood-pigeons or ſtock-doves, the lateſt in their arrival of the birds of paſſage, viſit us in this month.

Salmons

Salmons now begin to aſcend the rivers to ſpawn. Their force and agility in leaping over cataracts and other obſtacles to their aſcent, are very ſurprizing. They are frequently taken in this attempt, by nets or baſkets placed directly below the fall, into which they are carried after an unſucceſsful leap.

The farmer ſtrives during this month to finiſh all his plowing of fallows; and then lays up his utenſils till the enſuing year.

Cattle and horſes are taken out of the exhauſted paſtures, and kept in the houſe or yard. Hogs are put up to

ſatten.

fatten. Sheep are turned into the turnep-field, or, in ſtormy weather, fed with hay at the rick.

Bees now require to be moved under ſhelter; and the pigeons in the dove-houſe to be fed.

DECEMBER.

DECEMBER.

See, Winter comes, to rule the varied year,
Sullen and ſad, with all his riſing train;
Vapours, and clouds, and ſtorms.

THE changes which take place in the face of Nature during this month, are little more than ſo many advances in the progreſs towards univerſal gloom and deſolation.

No

No mark of vegetable life is ſeen,
No bird to bird repeats his tuneful call,
Save the dark leaves of ſome rude evergreen,
Save the lone red-breaſt on the moſs-grown wall.

SCOTT.

The day now rapidly decreaſes; the weather becomes foul and cold; and and as SHAKESPEARE expreſſes it,

The rain and wind beat dark December.

In this climate, however, no great and continued ſeverity of cold uſually takes place before the cloſe of the month.

Several of the wild quadrupeds now take to their winter concealments, which they

they either ſeldom or never quit during the Winter. Of theſe, ſome are in an abſolutely torpid or ſleeping ſtate, taking no food for a conſiderable time; others are only drowſy and inactive, and continue to feed on proviſions which they have hoarded up. In our mild climate few become entirely torpid. Bats do ſo, and retire early to caves and holes, where they remain the whole Winter, ſuſpended by the hind-feet, and cloſely wrapped up in the membranes of the fore-feet. As their food is chiefly inſects, they can lay up no ſtore for the Winter, and therefore muſt be ſtarved, did not Nature thus render

food unneceſſary for them. Dormice, alſo lie torpid the greateſt part of the Winter, though they lay up ſtores of proviſion. A warm day ſometimes revives them, when they eat a little, but ſoon relapſe into their former condition.

Squirrels and various kinds of field-mice, provide magazines of food againſt Winter, but are not known to become torpid. The badger, the hedgehog, and the mole, keep cloſe in their winter quarters in the northern regions, and ſleep away great part of the ſeaſon.

The gardener protects the tender products of his toil, from the destructive winds or nipping frost;—whilst the farmer resting from his labour, enjoys the festive season which this month always brings; and applies the rewards of his industry to bounteous hospitality and convivial happiness; even Nature pauses as it were, to recover from fatigue, and waits the succour of enlivening Spring.

FINIS.

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